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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE GROUP
 INTELLIGENCE REPORT

COUNTRY Germany/Russian Zone

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SUBJECT Inland Waterways in the Russian Zone

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ORIGIN

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SUPPLEMENT

1. Before the outbreak of World War II, German inland navigation had at its disposal 17,714 vessels with a carrying capacity of 6.4 million tons. The capital invested amounted to 2.5 billion RM. To illustrate the importance of German inland navigation, a comparison with German maritime navigation is of interest. Maritime navigation in 1939 disposed of 2,617 vessels with a carrying capacity of 3.8 million tons. They represented a capital investment of 1.2 billion RM. Maritime navigation, therefore, represented only fifteen percent of the number of vessels engaged in inland navigation, forty percent of its carrying capacity, and forty-eight percent of invested capital.
2. Navigable waterways in the Soviet Zone are of a total length of 3,938 km, of which approximately 3,268 km have been made navigable again since the termination of hostilities.
3. In the same period, nearly 800 vessels have been salvaged and to a great extent reconditioned.
4. A large percentage of the 514 bridges which were destroyed during the war have been repaired.
5. Inland water transport in the Russian Zone has, at present, at its disposal about 1,000 vessels carrying chiefly coal, building materials, grain, and fodder.
6. Whereas formerly Berlin was supplied via the Teltow Canal, and the Spree River, it is now necessary to travel the circuitous route via Plötzensee-Spandau, as only two of the sixty bridges across the Teltow Canal remain undamaged. Considerable time will elapse before the fifty-eight damaged bridges blocking traffic can be removed.
7. No building of new vessels can be envisaged for quite a time. Therefore, a resumption of more or less normal traffic can be achieved only by salvage and reconditioning. Many owners of sunk vessels do not have the necessary capital to pay for these costly operations. In such cases, the Generaldirektion der Schiff-fahrt (General Administration of Navigation) has advanced the required sums against a mortgage on the vessel. It is not expected that this practice can continue for long as such financial transactions are not within the legitimate charter of the Administration.

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8. The Generaldirektion der Schiff-fahrt was organized in June 1945, at first

as a section of the Berlin Head Food Office. In August 1945, it was attached to the German Central Administration for Traffic in the Soviet Zone. Its charter comprises (in excess of its former state obligations) the management of navigation, harbors, shipyards, and inland waterways.

9. Early in 1946, the Arbeitsgemeinschaft Binnenschiff-fahrt was formed which is subject to the Generaldirektion der Schiff-fahrt. Its special function is to accelerate the speed and turn-round of tugs and barges. In connection therewith, an extensive network of report stations has been organized to watch over speedy loading, unloading, and dispatching of vessels.

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